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ABSTRACT

This four-part paper examines formal and informal organizational structures at Selinsgrove Area Middle School, which serves about 1,000 students in grades 5-8. Part I presents a brief history of the founding of the school and the court battles preceding its construction, and the reasons why the initial steering committee chose a middle school organization operating on the team teaching and open space concept. Part II details the formal organizational structure of the school, including formal codes and procedures for staff and students; the structure of authority; formal means of staff and student evaluation; and influences on the organization from the state, teacher unions, parent groups, and professional associations. Part III discusses social organization and relationships in the school, including the influence of teaching teams on teacher and student networks; informal staff values related to cooperation and conflict; informal codes of behavior related to teacher conformity and student discipline; cliques and patterns of association among teachers, support staff, and students; sexist attitudes of male staff; relationships of the power structure to the formal authority structure and to cliques and networks; and informal means of teacher evaluation, reward, and "punishment." Part IV suggests a plan for organizational evaluation and change based on several theoretical models of change and change strategies. (SV)

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AN ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS OF SELINSGROVE AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL
Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania

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Introduction to Organization and Change Theory in Education

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AN ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS OF
SELINSGROVE AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL
Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania

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I. HISTORY AND MISSION OF SELINSGROVE AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Brief History

Although few people probably realized it at the time, the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy in January of 1961 marked the beginning of an era which would revolutionize American society. The notion that the individual had the potential to change American institutions and organizations evolved primarily because of the legislation and/or policies of the Kennedy Administration. From an educational viewpoint, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was probably one of the most important pieces of educational legislation ever approved by the Congress of the United States. Although ratified during the Presidency of Lyndon Johnson, the major groundwork for this Act was accomplished during John F. Kennedy's brief 34 months in office. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act prompted educators to develop many new and unique instructional procedures. One of the most innovative concepts developed during this decade was the "middle school."

During the early 1960's, in a town approximately 150 miles directly north of the Nation's Capital, a need for educational change was also apparent to both the administrative staff and Board of School Directors of the Selinsgrove Area School District. The final result of this change would prove to be an educational organization

directed towards the individual student, rather than an institution which would consider the individual as a mere member of a large bureaucratic organization.

The Selinsgrove Area School District is located fifty miles north of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania along the western shore of the Susquenanna River. The District currently serves the educational needs of public school pupils in Eastern Snyder County, Pennsylvania, with a total enrollment of approximately 2,700 students.

Prior to 1974, the Selinsgrove Area School District operated on a 6-6 grade system, consisting of two basic instructional levels. Six kindergarten through sixth grade elementary schools existed at various locations throughout the eastern portion of Snyder County. These schools served the local educational needs of students ages five to approximately twelve. A seventh through twelfth grade junior/senior high school was located within the Borough of Selinsgrove to educate pre-adolescents and adolescents from approximately ages twelve to eighteen. All seven school buildings were extremely overcrowded during the early 1960's, and enrollment projections into the 1970's indicated that the student population at every building would increase.

In January of 1963, the Board of School Directors of the Selinsgrove Area School District applied to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for a building permit

to construct a new junior high school. Unfortunately, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania had recently ratified legislation requiring the redistricting of many school entities within the state. Under this redistricting plan, the Selinsgrove Area School District was to merge with the existing Middleburg Area School District and West Snyder School District to form a county wide school system - the Snyder County Schools. For a number of economic and political reasons, the citizens and School Board of the Selinsgrove Area opposed this merger. Consequently, litigation on behalf of the Selinsgrove Area School District was filed with the Court of Common Pleas of Snyder County in September of 1963. The Opinion of the Court of Common Pleas favored the all-county school system, much to the dissatisfaction of the people of the Selinsgrove Area. Therefore, the case was appealed to the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court in May of 1964, who resolved the dispute in favor of the Selinsgrove Area School District by reversing and remanding the case to the Snyder County Court for final settlement. Following six years of litigation, the end result proved to be the continued independence of the Selinsgrove Area School District and the merger of only the Middleburg Area and West Snyder School Districts into the Midd-West School District.

Despite severe overcrowding in the Selinsgrove schools during the litigation period, the Pennsylvania Department of

Education would not allow the Selinsgrove Area School District to begin construction of the new junior high school until the question of district boundaries had been resolved by the Pennsylvania Courts. Finally, in October of 1969, following a lengthy court battle, the building project could again proceed, as the new reorganization would become effective in July of 1970. Although this delay created serious logistical problems for the students and staff, the postponement of construction did produce some positive results. A new movement directed towards the unique needs of pre-adolescents and adolescents began to gain momentum in the mid-1960's. Advocates of this notion proposed a separate school to accommodate the physiological and psychological transitions accompanying puberty. The creation of the "middle school" was not merely a new name for the junior high school, which had existed in American education since the mid-1900's, but a completely different philosophy of middle or intermediate level education. Unlike the junior high school, which operated as a quasi-senior high school, the middle school was intended to meet the individual and exploratory needs of student learners through instructional methods such as team teaching, interdisciplinary units, and contracts.

In 1966, Dr. Donald Eichhorn, then an Assistant Superintendent in the Upper St. Clair School District, published his book, The Middle School. Considered by many

to be the "Bible" of middle level education. Dr. Eichhorn's recommendations greatly influenced the administrative and teaching staff of the Selinsgrove Area School District. Therefore, in October of 1969 a decision was made to build a new middle school in Selinsgrove, as opposed to a new junior high school.

In November of 1969, during American Education Week, a steering committee of elementary and junior/senior high school teachers and administrators was established. This committee developed a philosophy and mission statement, and provided facility recommendations to the Board of School Directors. In August of 1970, Thomas Goas of Edmund G. Good Jr. and Partners, Harrisburg, was selected as architect for the building. Part of his duties were to incorporate the proposed facility requests of the steering committee into the building plan of the new middle school.

Two building sites had been selected for the new school by the administrative staff and School Board. One site, located approximately one mile west of the existing junior/senior high school, belonged to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as it was part of the land tract of the Selinsgrove State School (for retarded citizens). The other potential site was owned by one Simon Rhoads and was zoned as a residential area by the Borough of Selinsgrove. The Board of School Directors chose the latter site for the new middle school because of its close proximity to the existing

junior/senior high school and the local elementary school. Construction on this site would create a "school campus" and facilitate access to all three buildings. However, the Selinsgrove Zoning Board refused to change the residential status of the property, and the landowner would not agree to the proposed monetary settlement for the purchase of his land. Consequently, the Selinsgrove Area School District again resorted to the Pennsylvania Courts and acquired the 15.8 acres of land through an eminent domain settlement of $126,000 dollars.

Finally, on November 20, 1972, the ground breaking ceremony was conducted for the new Selinsgrove Area Middle School. Scheduled for completion by June 1, 1974, and occupancy in time for the 1974-1975 school year, a steel strike and a sluggish electrical contractor nearly delayed these target dates. However, the administrative and office staff of the building moved in on July 1, 1974 and the new middle school was dedicated on November 3, 1974.

The resulting building was a 4.7 million dollar structure with a student capacity of 1,000. Housing grades six, seven, and eight, the building was designed for interdisciplinary team teaching in three open-space areas known as "pods." Likewise, a unified arts suite containing a home economics area for both cooking and sewing, a wood and metal shop, and an art room completed the basic academic area of the building. Also, a cafeteria, library, music

suite, gymnasium, 650 seat auditorium, 150 seat large group instruction area, multi-purpose room, planetarium and middle school and central district offices are all part of the facility. One of the most unique features of Selinsgrove Area Middle School is the extensive use of semi-permanent metal walls which can be relocated with a minimal amount of dismantling required. Because of these movable walls, future facility and instructional needs can be easily accommodated at a very limited expense.

During the extensive planning and building of the facility, the curricular and instructional aspects of the new middle school were likewise addressed. In preparation for the team teaching approach to the open-space classroom, a variety of in-service programs were held for faculty members to orient and introduce them to the concept. Also, during the school year previous to the opening of the new building, several quasi-open-space pilot programs were established at two elementary schools and the Junior/Senior High School.

Due in large part to the declining school enrollments of the mid-1980's, and the poor physical condition of one of the six district elementary schools, Selinsgrove Area Middle School became a fifth through eighth grade building with the start of the 1983-1984 school year. After studying a variety of options available to the District, the Selinsgrove Area School Board chose to raze the Shamokin Dam

Elementary School and broaden the scope of the Middle School. Consequently, Selinsgrove Area Middle School currently houses grades five through eight, still operating on a team teaching/open-space concept.

Stated Mission

The Philosophy of Middle School Education was developed and drafted by the initial Selinsgrove Area Middle School steering committee and was utilized as the foundation for facility and curricular design. This philosophy has remained unchanged since the building opened in 1974. It is primarily based on the notion of an exploratory school.

> The Middle School Program and Organizations are designed to serve the educational needs of the "in between teenagers" (older children, pre-adolescents, early adolescents) in a school bridging the elementary school for childhood and the high school adolescent. The needs of these students can best be served by providing optimum individualization of curriculum and instruction for a population characterized by great variability. It is the aim of the Middle School to promote continuous progress through and smooth articulation between the several phases and levels of the total educational program. The accomplishment of this aim can best be achieved by developing the following objectives.[1]

Major Stated Values

Selinsgrove Area Middle School subscribes to ten major objectives also developed and drafted by the initial middle

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1. Selinsgrove Area Middle School Student Handbook (1989), p. 7.

school steering committee. Both the philosophy and objectives preface every grade and subject area curriculum, and are included in the annual student/parent handbook. It is hoped that each course of study reflects these objectives through specific unit intended learning outcomes.

> The organization of the Middle School Program is designed to ...
> ... provide the students with the opportunity to develop wholesome attitudes about themselves.
> ... lead the student into a deeper understanding of his role as an individual as well as a member of a peer group.
> ... give the student an opportunity to develop at his own rate mentally, socially and emotionally.
> ... provide the opportunities for the student to begin work toward self-directed learning.
> ... create a flexible curriculum so that students will learn more readily of the changing society in which they live.
> ... endeavor to create an atmosphere in which a student will be able to achieve in some aspect of the program.
> ... present an opportunity for students to develop a continuing respect for learning.
> ... provide the scope of learning which will permit students an opportunity to become thinking, analytical, reflective members of a democratic society.
> ... promote student awareness for an appreciation of aesthetic and cultural aspects of our society.
> ... develop and expand on basic learning skills.[2]

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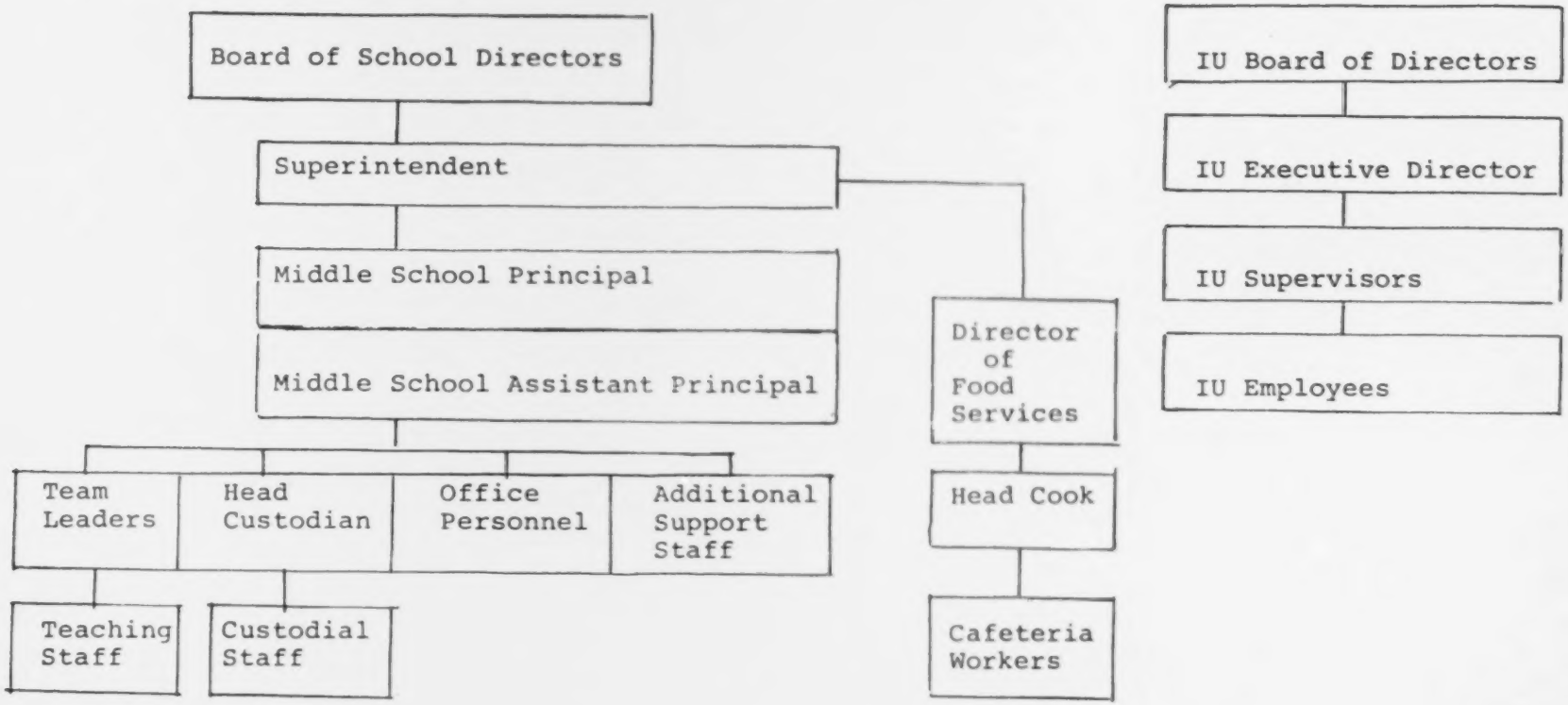
2. Selinsgrove Area Middle School Student Handbook (1989), p. 7.

II. FORMAL STRUCTURE OF SELINSGROVE AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

FORMAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Formal Codes

Several types of formal codes exist within the Selinsgrove Area School District and Selinsgrove Area Middle School. A large and diversified number of School Board Policies address student conduct, employee expectations, program and curricular procedures, student readiness and entrance requirements, attendance concerns, and other specific policies, many as required by the Pennsylvania Public School Code.

A number of building procedures as determined by the administrative staff of Selinsgrove Area Middle School have been developed to expedite the educational process. Some of these procedures appear in writing, such as a building evacuation policy, an approved listing of places Middle School students can visit on curricular field trips and means to arrange for trip transportation, a disciplinary referral system, a method of employee request to be absent from school duties, a parental and student conference documentation format, and procedures for psychological testing of potential learning disabled or gifted students. Most of these procedures exist as written forms which are processed and filed as appropriate. Likewise, many building procedures are presented orally to staff members at faculty meetings, in-service sessions, new employee orientation

sessions, and/or individual or team conferences with administrative staff members.

A student handbook outlining the Middle School Philosophy and Objectives, curricular and conduct expectations, and logistical items is presented to each student at the start of every school year. A portion of the Student Handbook requires parents to confirm in writing (a quasi-contract system) that they have reviewed the handbook with their child, and both parent(s) and student understand the information contained within the document.

Detailed written curricula or courses of study exist for every subject area in every grade at Selinsgrove Area Middle School. All of these curricula state the Middle School Philosophy and Objectives, and include overall course objectives, individual unit objectives, methods of evaluation, listings of instructional resources, and means of implementation of Pennsylvania's Twelve Quality Goals of Education through the course of study.

Regarding the labor relationship between the Board of School Directors and the teaching staff, the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Selinsgrove Area School District and the Selinsgrove Area Education Association serves as the formal code in this domain. Included in this agreement or contract are teaching salary schedules, co-curricular and extra-curricular stipends, information on negotiated leaves of absence, grievance procedures, and

ground rules as to the methods of fulfilling the state-mandated "Meet and Discuss" program.

Structure of Authority

As indicated on the organizational chart, full authority and responsibility for Selinsgrove Area Middle School lies with the Building Principal. Oftentimes, several areas of this responsibility are delegated to the Assistant Principal for implementation and/or supervision. All counselors, teachers, office personnel, support staff, and custodians are supervised by the Middle School Principal. The Principal reports directly to the Superintendent of Schools, who is supervised by the Board of School Directors.

Only two classifications of Middle School employees are not under the authority of the Building Principal. These include cafeteria workers, who report to their appropriate Head Cook, who, in turn, is supervised by the Director of Food Services. The Director reports directly to the District Superintendent. Likewise, employees of the Central Susquenanna Intermediate Unit, the Pennsylvania equivalent to the New York State Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) system, who are contracted for services by the Selinsgrove Area School District, report directly to their Intermediate Unit supervisor.

Indirectly related to the authority structure is the Selinsgrove Area School District transportation system. The District does not own its own school buses, but contracts these services from a local vendor. While the District employs a Coordinator of Transportation to arrange bus schedules, and serve as a liaison between the District and the vendor, no authority of School District administration exists over school bus drivers who service the District.

Formal Means of Evaluation

Probably the most intensive formal means of evaluation in which Selinsgrove Area Middle School is involved is the Long Range Plan process. Each school district in Pennsylvania is required by state mandate to develop a long range plan considering a variety of educational and related areas. From a district perspective, items such as demographics, employment, professional/staff development and in-service program, vocational education, enrollment, financial status, facilities and equipment, and gifted and special education programs are all considered. Also, a large segment is included in the Plan regarding each instructional level - Elementary, Middle School, and High School. Components of the Middle School section of the plan include student growth assessment data and information, major activities and means of evaluation by which to implement priority goals, and an analysis of the Twelve

Quality Goals of Education and learning objectives by Middle School planned courses.

Following School Board and Pennsylvania Department of Education approval of the Long Range Plan, it is expected that the proposed goals and program will be implemented and monitored. To that end, the Long Range Plan process is undertaken (and required) every five years, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the former plan, and determine goals and directions for the new plan.

Standardized student tests are frequently used as a means of evaluating curricular effectiveness at Selinsgrove Area Middle School. The Stanford Achievement Tests are annually administered to all students, and fifth and eighth grade students are required to take the Pennsylvania Testing for Essential Learning and Literacy Skills (TELLS), a reading and mathematics competency measure. Results of these tests are analyzed by administrative staff members to locate possible areas of the academic curriculum which may require further investigation.

Another standardized measure in Pennsylvania taken by both students and teachers is the Educational Quality Assessment (EQA). This test is intended to determine the implementation and effectiveness of Pennsylvania's Twelve Quality Goals of Education. The student portion measures knowledge in curricular and social areas. The teacher questionnaire determines faculty opinions of the building

administrative staff and the overall teacher perceptions of the school. Attitudes relative to principals' knowledge, accessibility, and respect from employees are included as part of the Educational Quality Assessment.

During its fifteen year history, quasi-formal evaluations of the building have occasionally been conducted by the District Superintendent and external consultants. One of these outside resource people during the mid-1970's was Dr. Donald Eichhorn, then Superintendent of the nearby Lewisburg Area School District and author of The Middle School. As previously mentioned, Dr. Eichhorn's book, and his notions of team teaching and the open-space concept greatly influenced the design and construction of the building and its instructional program.

Individual professional employee performance evaluations, as required by the Pennsylvania Public School Code, have had some indirect effect upon the organization. In determining teacher assignments, and realignment of teaching teams, aspects of these formal evaluations have been considered. Likewise, formal custodian evaluations, as occasionally performed by the Middle School Principal, have been incorporated into building personnel decisions.

Other Forces in the Environment Relative to the Organization

Certainly, the mandates and requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the State Board of Education have a considerable influence on the formal

structure of Selinsgrove Area Middle School. A master schedule for the building must reflect the curricular requirements of the Commonwealth. Facility maintenance must be performed in accordance with state-prescribed regulations, and disciplinary sanctions against both students and employees are frequently controlled by various state-level regulations or laws.

Collective Bargaining legislation also has a direct effect on the formal organization. Relative to that area, the policies and agendas of the National Education Association (NEA) and Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) can greatly influence the employee expectation of the formal organization.

Parental influence frequently determines changes in District policies and/or building procedures. A Selinsgrove Area Middle School Committee (SAMS Committee) serves the school as a parental advisory board. Although intended to exist as an informational liaison between the school and the home, suggestions or concerns are often presented to the administrative or teaching staff via this committee. Similarly, community expectations in general have an enormous influence on the formal organization of Selinsgrove Area Middle School. The citizens of the Selinsgrove Area have come to expect certain curricular and extra-curricular programs to be exceptional, and will be supportive of these

programs, or demand their improvement should their quality lessen.

Finally, the diversified number of professional organizations to which administrators and teachers are affiliated relate to the formal organization. Certainly, innovative ideas learned at professional conferences, research findings as gleaned through professional journals, and participation in regionally-sponsored meetings of these organizations all have an effect upon the change and improvement of the formal structure of Selinsgrove Area Middle School.

III. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND RELATIONSHIPS AT SELINSGROVE AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Social Organization

Many of the social relationships among faculty and students at Selinsgrove Area Middle School are as a result of team or department location within the building. From a staff perspective, three large planning rooms exist for team teachers: two teams of five teachers each occupy these centers. Members of the unified arts staff share a common planning area and the music department also has its own planning room. Consequently, a great deal of social interaction occurs between the individuals in their team areas. Oftentimes, members of the unified arts team or special service faculty members (counselors, gifted teachers, resource class teachers, librarians, etc.) feel isolated from the comradery of the academic subject teams. Many of these faculty members make special efforts to "get-out into the building" and establish and maintain a social and professional rapport with the faculty members, while others are content to be isolated in their own department.

Student social relationships are also greatly determined by team placement. Half of a student's day is spent in the POD area with fellow students on his/her team. Therefore, strong social friendships develop among these students. Like the faculty, those students who involve themselves in activities outside of the academic classroom

tend to develop friendships with others in the school. Organizations such as band, chorus, intramurals, sports teams, student council, and after-school clubs do allow interested students to interact with the rest of the student body. However, many students not involved in these types of activities limit their social contacts to only their team members.

Obviously, a strong nexus exists between the formal structure of Selinsgrove Area Middle School and the social organization. Not only does the team teaching concept serve as a system of formal organization, but it also is an important determinant in the social relationships of both faculty and staff.

Major Informal Values

In a building which subscribes to a team teaching philosophy, certainly the unstated value of cooperation must exist. In order for five subject-area teachers to plan and teach lessons effectively, a great deal of cooperation is necessary. However, as is always present with cooperation, conflict also exists at Selinsgrove Area Middle School. In a school where faculty members work very closely with each other, conflicts occasionally arise (on some teams more than on others). It is during a conflict situation that the team leader, other team members, and possibly the administrative

staff need to intervene and mediate a dispute, in order to uphold the cooperative teaming process.

Conformity vs. non-conformity serves as another informal value dilemma effecting both staff and students at Selinsgrove Area Middle School. Staff members who consistently conform to the directives and wishes of the administrative staff, their team leader, and/or other team teachers are frequently viewed as outstanding faculty members, even though their teaching skills might be very weak. The ability to function as a "team player" is highly valued by those favoring conformity. Conversely, members of the faculty who do not conform to the expectations and desires of administrators, team leaders, or team members are often viewed as rebels or negative influences within the school, despite the fact that many of them exhibit outstanding classroom teaching skills.

Oftentimes, the labeling of faculty members as a conformist or a non-conformist occurs immediately (or even preceeding) one's joining the middle school staff. Once a label has been determined for faculty members, there is little chance for one to reverse that label, due to the "close-mindedness" of those who categorize the various teachers and staff members.

Ironically, the same type of process exists for students. Academic achievement and classroom conduct (discipline) are two examples of areas which divide students

into "good and bad." Particularly in the area of student discipline, these categories are made known to teachers before the student ever begins his/her middle school experience. Many times, fifth grade teachers are informed by their elementary school colleagues as to which students are disruptive and/or disciplinary problems. Academic grades also play an enormous role in the determination of "good vs. bad" students. Generally, most students are aware of the category to which they belong, and teachers begin to make student classifications early in the school year, if not predetermined by data collected about a student prior to his/her assignment to a particular teacher.

Informal Codes

As mentioned previously, the conformity or non-conformity of staff members plays an important role at Selinsgrove Area Middle School. Conformists are frequently rewarded for their behavior by the administrative staff through indirect means, such as an easy teaching schedule, a limited number of non-teaching duties, unlimited instructional materials and equipment, and other miscellaneous amenities. Oftentimes, the non-conformist is "punished" for not being a team player by the opposite of the above rewards - a demanding teaching schedule, a large number of non-teaching duties, and very limited instructional resources.

Sexist attitudes within the building are an ever-present informal convention which effect the social structure. A good number of male chauvinists often criticize the suggestions and contributions of the female members of the staff. The women of the faculty are viewed by these individuals as less-committed to the profession, as they only serve as teachers to provide a second income to supplement their husband's much greater salary. While many men of the faculty view their female counterparts as inferior, these notions only perpetuate feelings of discrimination and retaliation by the women members of the staff.

At Selinsgrove Area Middle School, the administrative staff of the building has attempted to create an informal disciplinary code to supplement the formal student conduct policies. Examples of such informal means include the frequent assignment of staff to non-teaching duties, in an attempt to have an authority figure visible at critical times during the school day. Bus duty, cafeteria supervision, dismissal duty, and assembly monitoring all serve as examples of these attempts to create an informal disciplinary code.

Cliques, Networks, and Patterns of Association

In a team concept middle school, it is not surprising that teams of teachers can often operate as cliques. Many

of these teams will have "ally" teams to which they are sympathetic, and "enemy" teams caused by conflicts in educational philosophies or social friendships. The administrative staff of Selinsgrove Area Middle School has attempted to avoid such patterns by reassignment and realignment of academic teachers every several years, in order to "shake-up the troops." Also, personnel changes and the hiring of new staff can serve as a deterrent to a team of teachers becoming an isolated network.

A separation between administrative and support staff from bargaining unit members is sometimes evident, particularly during a contract negotiations year or during a dispute which has resulted in grievance proceedings. The administrative staff is oftentimes asked by the School Board to "keep its distance" from the teaching staff during times when contract negotiations are not proceeding positively and/or a labor dispute or crisis may be pending.

Within the teacher's union, contrasting philosophical networks also exist. A good number of the Selinsgrove Area Education Association membership subscribe to a conservative philosophy in regards to the Association. These individuals view the mission of the Association as an organization of professionals committed to labor relations in a very diplomatic and professional manner. Other members of the Selinsgrove Area Education Association see the organization strictly as a union, with strong union philosophies as its

foundation. The latter individuals subscribe to an administration as management and teachers as labor philosophy, and do not find any merit in attempting to develop a professional rapport between the two entities.

The Selinsgrove Area Middle School office staff serves as a very powerful clique, and exists together as "one big, happy family." Secretaries and clerical personnel within the office greatly enjoy their accessibility to the administrative staff, and likewise, thrive on "gossip" or "dirt" about the school and/or the faculty. Although it is expected that these individuals maintain confidentiality in regards to personnel and private matters, the teaching staff all recognize that once a secretary is aware of a problem or a personnel conflict, the entire school and community will soon be informed. In addition to serving as disseminators of information, the office staff can also be collectors of pending complaints or problems, and report such information to the Principal before he would otherwise be made aware of a situation. In certain instances, the office staff is made to feel part of the management team, is given confidential information prior to its release to anyone else, and exists as a strong power network within the Middle School.

Similar to the conflict of the conformists vs. the non-conformists, dissension exists among the faculty against those teachers, usually conformists, who "run and tattle" to

the administrative staff about other faculty members. Like the secretary who serves as informant, these teachers are rewarded for alerting the administrative staff to potential problems. Such rewards only reinforce this system for those who serve as informants, and only increase the conflict between the informants and the rest of the staff.

Interestingly enough, this system not only occurs at the administrator-teacher level, but also at the teacher-student level. Many teachers reward students who act as informants against other students. Other teachers attempt to discourage such behavior in order to avoid that type of network.

Other examples of student cliques are evident at Selinsgrove Area Middle School. Many of these patterns are the direct result of the formal structure of the organization. Examples would include the networking among band members, chorus members, sports team members, student council representatives, club members, and library aides. Other networks are self-imposed or student-created and would include gifted students, special education students, jocks, teacher pets, and disruptive students.

One final clique within Selinsgrove Area Middle School which is diminishing over the years is the "founding fathers" network. A small number of original steering committee members who developed the Middle School curricula and assisted in the building design still serve on the

staff. Consequently, these individuals have a strong emotional interest in the building and their contributions to its initial establishment. Oftentimes, the "founding fathers" are not pleased by changes and/or recommendations made by new staff members contrary to the original systems or procedures developed by the steering committee. New staff members are sometimes viewed as unappreciative rebels who are ungrateful teachers, as the new teachers "blood and sweat" was not involved in the initial planning and building of the Middle School.

While most of the cliques and networks at Selinsgrove Area Middle School exist independently of one another, certain events will cause these cliques to rally together for a common cause. Two examples will illustrate this action. First, even though philosophical differences exist among members of the bargaining unit, these differences are dismissed when a united Association is needed to accept or reject a negotiated contract offer, or consider a teacher strike. Secondly, although conflict may exist among a team of teachers, these differences are put aside when the team needs to justify its actions or procedures to an administrator or parent.

Relationship of Power to the Authority Structure

Certainly, the Principal and Assistant Principal are the formal controllers of power at Selinsgrove Area Middle

School. An illustrative example of their power is in the area of staffing and personnel decisions. The building administration generally determines replacements for vacant positions, and transfers of individuals to other positions, either voluntarily or involuntarily. A second instance is evident through the power of punishment (i.e. - disciplinary reprimands of staff and students) which is often determined by the building administration. From a teacher perspective, the authority of the Principal or the Assistant Principal to "grant favors" to the staff provides a means of power relative to their position. The teacher, when making a request, knows that the Principal has the authority to give permission to engage in an activity or event which might be contrary to the formal or informal rules of the Middle School.

The Team Leaders of Selinsgrove Area Middle School also assist the Principal in exhibiting power through authority. All of the Team Leaders are selected by the administration. Therefore, most Team Leaders become the Principal's confidants and allies. In order to maintain their Team Leader position and the amenities (both monetarily and socially) that are associated with their position, the Team Leaders will be certain to implement the desires of the Principal, and report to him those teachers who are not following the directives of the Team Leader. Oftentimes, this situation creates a dilemma in that the Team Leaders

are not always sympathetic to the concerns of the faculty, as they are committed to their loyalty to the Principal and his agendas for the school.

The teaching staff of Selinsgrove Area Middle School also recognizes the power that results through the authority structure and formal organizational chart. Consequently, many teachers subscribe to a "know where your bread is buttered" philosophy and beckon to every wish and command of their team leader and the administrative staff. Other staff members, usually considered to be more independent, attempt to respect the authority structure, yet implement programs and instructional ideas as they see fit. Sometimes these individuals are considered "rebels" because of their disrespect and lack of loyalty to the authority figures of the school.

Student dynamics also seem to parallel this pattern. Some students view the teacher as superior to them, therefore listening and following every direction given by the teacher. Oftentimes, we think of this as respect for the teacher. Other students believe or enjoy a less-formal superior-subordinate relationship between teacher and student. In some classrooms, where the teacher is amenable to this notion, this system seems to work very well. In other classrooms, such a view of teacher and student as equal partners in education is not sanctioned, and the

student who is "disrespectful" to the authority of the teacher is punished accordingly.

Relationship of Power to Cliques and Networks

One of the most obvious examples of a network which has a great amount of power within the organization is the local teachers association. The Collective Bargaining Agreement between the School District and the Association greatly restricts the power available to the School Board or administrative staff. Areas which are addressed in a negotiated contract, such as hours, wages, and conditions of employment, specifically determine procedures to be followed within these categories. Despite the fact that those in authority may wish to deviate from these standards, the grievance and arbitration system limits their ability to do so.

As mentioned previously, due to their physical proximity to the administration and their ability to serve as informants, the office staff of Selinsgrove Area Middle School has a great deal of power. Because the Principal often feels a loyalty to these valuable employees, their special requests are often granted. Similarly, the power of accessibility to the administrative staff can easily be controlled through the secretaries and clerical personnel (gatekeepers). Individuals in the school with concerns contrary to those of the office staff may not "get past" the

secretaries to the administration because of the power the secretaries hold in granting that accessibility.

Social power is often granted to the "founding fathers" as a result of their years of commitment to the planning and implementation of Selinsgrove Area Middle School. These people are sometimes recognized at retirement dinners for fellow "founding fathers" and considered to be the unofficial historians of the school. Their obligation to collect newspaper articles, school newsletters, programs, and photographs of the life of the school is a duty inherent to their position as a "founding father."

Oftentimes, groups of parents serve as powerful networks which effect the operation of the school. Parents who are collectively upset over the instructional techniques of a particular teacher will not hesitate to band together and complain as a group to the building administrator(s). Likewise, parents of some of the student self-imposed cliques will network to request change in a particular area. A recent example at Selinsgrove Area Middle School was the networking of parents of gifted students to protest a proposed curricular change which would have eliminated enrichment activities for these students. The gifted parents were very quick to organize and oppose the plan. Consequently, the decision was reversed by the administration, and the program returned to its former system. Similar cliques by band parents, sports parents,

special education parents, and citizens opposed to tax increases can all become power networks which can alter the authority of the formal structure of the school.

Informal Means of Evaluation

Both the former and current Principal of Selinsgrove Area Middle School subscribe to the philosophy that the best informal measure of a good school is by the morale and mood of the teaching staff. They feel that if the teachers are happy, satisfied people, the students will also enjoy school. However, our class discussions would question the validity of this notion.

As mentioned previously, the rewarding of "team players" and the withholding of rewards from "rebels" serves as an informal means of evaluation at Selinsgrove Area Middle School. Most of the informants and conformists who exhibit outstanding potential in both of these areas are eventually selected to be Team Leaders. Conversely, teacher transfers without due cause are occasionally the result of rebellious and/or uncooperative behavior between a teacher and the administration.

Staff members who frequently go "above and beyond the call of duty" are informally rewarded for this activity. Because one may serve as a chaperone for school dances, sports events, concerts, etc., he/she is viewed as committed to the organization and deserving of an extra smile in the

morning, or a positive comment following performance of a minor task. As mentioned earlier, such martyrdom may effect one's formal evaluation, as a weak teacher's classroom problems may be overlooked because of that person's commitment to the extra-curricular activities of the school. Individuals who do not involve themselves beyond the specified hours of the Collective Bargaining Agreement are usually not given this extra allowance.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL MODIFICATION AND CHANGE

Discussion of Major Changes Needed

The writer believes an analogy can be developed between Selinsgrove Area Middle School and a residential home. When one experiences the building of a new house, he/she generally begins the project by purchasing land, hiring a contractor, and witnessing the construction period. Upon completion, the resident(s) moves into his/her new home; however, the building contractor may occasionally need to return during the first several months of occupancy to repair a few construction problems in the house. At this point, the stages of maintaining a home can almost be compared to human physiological and psychological stages of development.

The ensuing years in that home generally provide a period of stability. The "newness" of the house requires some minor maintenance, but these early years are relatively free of serious problems. Nonetheless, when that house reaches age twenty, major repairs are generally needed. Appliances and carpeting may need to be replaced, a new roof might be installed, an updated heating system could be needed, replacement of windows may be required, etc. The most effective way to approach these impending repairs is through a systematic maintenance plan. Such plan would avoid an unorganized repair schedule. It would be silly for the homeowner to replace his/her living room carpeting before painting the walls and ceiling, for fear of spilling

paint on the new carpeting. Common sense would dictate that the painting should occur first.

A very similar situation seems to currently exist at Selinsgrove Area Middle School. Following many years of planning and hours of commitment by those involved in its development, Selinsgrove Area Middle School was physically constructed and instructionally designed. During the early years of its operation, several "bugs" had to be eliminated with both the physical plant and the curricular program. The last several years have brought a considerable amount of stability to Selinsgrove Area Middle School. However, twenty years have elapsed since the formation of the original steering committee to plan and build the new middle school. Just like the twenty-year-old house, Selinsgrove Area Middle School has reached an institutional age when it is time to develop a "maintenance plan" to address several needed "major repairs".

An informal discussion initiated by the writer with several faculty members disclosed a variety of areas in which they feel change is needed. The following concerns were expressed by these faculty members - a new master schedule is urgently needed, a ten-minute morning homeroom would greatly alleviate first period class interruptions by providing a time for students to report to the office and other areas during that homeroom time, a shift of silent reading time to the end of the day would avoid last period

class interruptions for administrative matters, realignment of teachers on academic teams is needed, the administrative staff needs to separate itself from the office staff, and a course of study in sex education desperately needs to be incorporated into the curriculum.

It should be noted that the above list is by no means an empirical survey of a cross-section of the faculty. They are merely comments solicited from a very small number of employees. One might even question if the above suggestions are nothing more than "idle bitching". However, it does appear that some staff members would welcome some changes within the school.

Based on the above analogy and informal data collected, the writer would propose a major change at Selinsgrove Area Middle School through the involvement of a cross-section of the administration, faculty, and staff in a comprehensive internal re-evaluation. A task force of <u>volunteers</u> from the above groups (not "hand-picked" committee members by the administration or team leaders) should be established to examine the "State of Selinsgrove Area Middle School." This task force should consider the relevance of the Middle School philosophy, objectives, and mission statement, and should propose changes, if necessary, to address the educational goals of middle level students for the 1990's. Curricular areas should be examined, and a new scheduling system should be studied. A re-assessment of the open-space

and team teaching concept should be undertaken by the task force. Immediately upon formation of this task force, an objective and subjective needs assessment should be distributed to all staff members to determine areas which are considered school strengths and program weaknesses. An opportunity to suggest solutions for these weaknesses should be included as a component of the survey. Institutions outside of the school should also be involved in the data collection process. Parents, community members, local universities, and the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit are just some examples of entities related to the school whose input could be valuable in determining strengths and improvements needed at Selinsgrove Area Middle School.

All of the information processed, researched, and discussed by the re-evaluation task force would culminate in a written document explaining areas which the committee considers to be strengths of the school (commendations), items which need to be corrected and/or changed (recommendations), and a timeline and implementation plan for these recommendations. It is important to note here that the job of the task force would not end upon the distribution of this report to the middle school community (as has been past practice with the Selinsgrove Area School District Long Range Plan). Instead, this committee would need to constantly monitor the implementation of its

recommendations and could not disband until all recommendations had been satisfactorily addressed.

In addition to identifying current strengths and weaknesses of Selinsgrove Area Middle School, this task force would also create a second generation of "founding fathers" and do much to reduce the separation felt between the original "founding fathers" and more recent staff members. As mentioned previously, many of the teachers who have joined the faculty since the establishment of the Middle School are viewed as "foreigners" or "rebels" by the "founding fathers" because of their suggestions which dare to contradict the originally established procedures of the 1969 steering committee. The creation of the re-evaluation task force would not only include "founding fathers" who again wished to serve on this committee, but would also provide a forum for the newer members of the staff to contribute ideas or suggestions in an environment established for that purpose. Hopefully, participation in such an activity would not only result in an improved Selinsgrove Area Middle School curricular and instructional program, but also a renewed sense of staff morale and "esprit de corps."

With an internal re-evaluation completed and all major recommendations implemented, the writer would propose one more long-range goal for Selinsgrove Area Middle School. Once the homeowner has completed all of his "twenty year

repairs," he might be apt to ask a relative or a neighbor to examine the house and offer any repair suggestions which the owner may not have noticed. With a renovated Selinsgrove Area Middle School prepared to address the educational needs of the 1990's, the writer believes that a formal external evaluation, possibly during the 1994-1995 school year (twenty-five years following the establishment of the original steering committee), would be healthy. An external evaluation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools or the National Middle School Association would bring that "neighbor's" ideas and suggestions to Selinsgrove Area Middle School. The internal re-evaluation process undertaken by the task force could easily be modified and adapted to the pre-evaluation procedures as required by the Middle States Association.

With its "house" recently renovated, the writer believes that the results of a Middle States Evaluation would prove very positive, and suggestions made by the Middle States or Middle School Committee might be areas that could go unnoticed by the internal task force. Surely, the implementation of recommendations produced by an internal and external evaluation would result in a very good Selinsgrove Area Middle School in 1989 becoming a regionally, and possibly, nationally recognized example of an outstanding educational organization meeting the twenty-first century needs of middle level students.

Change Theories and Strategies

The establishment and implementation of a re-evaluation task force at Selinsgrove Area Middle School parallels the pragmatic advocate model discussed by Gallaher.[3] His model attempts to create a climate which will support change. Gallaher emphasizes that the processes of acceptance of change are critical steps in the pragmatic advocate model. "The success or failure of change is due to the advocates' [of change] understanding the content and internal organization of [the school]."[4] Therefore, the involvement of a cross-section of administrators, teachers, and staff members on the re-evaluation task force would be essential to the successful implementation of the changes prepared by this committee. If we are to concur with Gallaher's notions, Gallaher believes that the pragmatic advocate model also supports research indicating that people will accept ideas they understand and/or see as relevant, and will accept changes in which they participated in planning.[5]

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3. Art Gallaher, Jr., "Directed Change in Formal Organizations: The School System" in Cultural Relevance and Educational Issues, ed. F. Ianni and J. Storey (Boston: Little Brown, 1973), p. 327.

4. Gallaher, p. 328.

5. Numerous references listed, Gallaher, p. 328.

In terms of the pragmatic advocate model, Gallaher discusses the expectations of change. He stresses that those attempting to implement change should be aware of areas where people have come to value and to expect change. These areas promise the greatest potential for successful change. Relating theory to practice, the objective and subjective needs assessment distributed to all staff members and school-related interest organizations could be a crucial component of the task force's agenda. As indicated above, in areas where people expect change, they will be more likely to facilitate proposed means of change.

Getzels considers change to exist in three forms - enforced, expedient, or essential.[6] The establishment of a re-evaluation task force could easily be categorized as a type of essential change. Essential change "derives from the abilities, interests, insights, and volunteerism of the individuals [of the] organization. The result is ... creative transformation based on commitment and principle."[7] Essential change differs from enforced or expedient change

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6. J. W. Getzels, "Theory and Research on Leadership: Some Comments and Alternatives," in Leadership: The Science and the Art Today, ed. L. L. Cunningham and W. J. Gephart (Itasca, IL: Peacock, 1973), pp. 16-26; referenced in James M. Lipham, Robb E. Rankin, and James A. Hoeh, Jr., The Principalship: Concepts, Competencies, and Cases. (New York: Longman Inc., 1985), p. 107.

7. Getzels; referenced in Lipham, Rankin, and Hoeh, p. 109.

in that the latter two forms are usually the result of accommodation or reaction to demands placed upon the school from external groups or agencies, whereas essential change is primarily initiated by the members of the organization.

Differing from Getzels' categories, Hanson considers change to occur in three ways - planned change, spontaneous change, and evolutionary change.[8] Clearly, the establishment of a re-evaluation task force is a form of planned change which is "a conscious and deliberate attempt to manage events so that the outcome is redirected by design to some predetermined end."[9] Within planned change, Chin and Benne have identified three types of change strategies - empirical-rational, normative-reeducative, and power-coercive.[10] Change strategies proposed by the re-evaluation task force would probably be either empirical-rational or normative-reeducative. Empirical-rational strategies assume that an organization will change when data

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8. E. Mark Hanson, Educational Administration and Organizational Behavior, 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1985), pp. 286-287.

9. Hanson, p. 287.

10. Chin and Benne, "General Strategies for Effecting Changes," p. 34; referenced in Hanson, p. 309.

reveal that such action is justified. Surely, changes based upon the results of the objective portion of the needs assessment survey would provide empirical evidence of areas which the school staff and its related organizations would desire change. In considering strategies by which to approach the subjective results of the needs assessment, normative-reeducative means would be more appropriate. In addition to dealing not only with objective elements, normative-reeducative strategies also consider feelings and values. Chin and Benne found this approach very effective in areas such as - team building, interpersonal relationships, staff loyalties, and skills.[11]

Research performed by Havelock and Paul indicates that educational change can be considered in terms of four models - problem solving, social interaction, research-development-diffusion-utilization, and linkage.[12] The writer believes that a problem-solving model as developed by Jung and Lippitt would be an effective method

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11. Chin and Benne: referenced in Hanson, p. 309.

12. R. G. Havelock, Planning for Innovation Through the Dissemination and Utilization of Knowledge (Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge, 1969); D. A. Paul, "Change Processes at the Elementary, Secondary, and Postsecondary Levels of Education," in Linking Processes in Educational Improvement, ed. N. Nash and J. A. Culbertson (Columbus, OH: University Council for Educational Administration, 1977), pp. 7-13; both referenced in Liphan, Rankin, and Hoen, p. 109.

for the re-evaluation task force to utilize.[13] The six basic steps in the problem-solving model involve - identifying problems (i.e. - through a needs assessment survey), diagnosing problems, collecting of data and discussing its implications for overcoming problems (i.e. - the task force may need to review the research literature on identified problems), forming possible solutions to problems, testing the feasibility of solutions, and implementing selected solutions. The writer would suggest the addition of a seventh step to the model - evaluating selected solutions following their implementation.

Following the determination of areas to be changed through the problem-solving model, the Selinsgrove Area Middle School re-evaluation task force could begin the phases of implementing these proposed changes. Based upon studies by Hage and Aiken, Berman and McLaughlin, and Klausmeier, Karges, and Krupa, Lipham, Rankin, and Hoeh categorize change into seven phases in their text.[14] These phases include awareness, initiation, implementation, routinization, refinement, renewal, and evaluation. The

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13. C. Jung and R. Lippitt, "The Study of Change as a Concept in Research Utilization," Theory into Practice, 5 (1966), 25-29; referenced in Lipham, Rankin, and Hoeh, pp. 109-110.

14. Lipham, Rankin, and Hoeh, p. 113.

first three of these categories will be considered at this time, while the final four sections will be discussed in the succeeding segment of this paper, as they relate to monitoring and evaluating change.

Certainly, the conclusions of the re-evaluation task force would need to be disseminated to all staff members at Selinsgrove Area Middle School. The most effective forum for such initial awareness of these results would first be through a formal presentation of the report document to all staff members. Soon afterwards, small group discussion meetings (teams of teachers, etc.) could be facilitated by members of the task force. Likewise, the parental advisory group, School Board, district office personnel, and other organizations who may have been involved in the needs assessment process would need to be informed of the task force conclusions and recommendations. Opportunities for questions and discussion regarding proposed changes should be incorporated into these presentations.

As determined by the task force through the problem solving model, the initiation of new changes can begin following the awareness phase. The support of these proposed changes by the task force is crucial during this stage to encourage staff members who may be reluctant to change to, at least, attempt the proposed actions. Similar to the quasi-open-space pilot programs established the year before the new middle school was occupied, the creation of

pilot programs prior to a major change would serve as an effective means of initiation, and allow for a smoother transition to phase III - implementation.

During phase III of the process, change is completely implemented into the educational program of the school. Open channels of communication among administrators, faculty, and staff are vital to the success of an innovation during this period. Problems with the new idea must be eliminated as quickly as possible. During the implementation phase, the innovation must be given every opportunity to succeed, and staff members must be encouraged to remain positive about the change, and not become frustrated or discouraged while early "bugs" are being fixed within the innovations.

Monitoring and Evaluating Change

The four final phases of change presented by Lipham, Rankin, and Hoen are routinization, refinement, renewal, and evaluation.[15] All four of these processes occur following the actual implementation of the desired change. During the routinization phase, the task force would have to be supportive of all staff members, as they are learning new strategies. The role of the task force in observing and collecting data during the routinization process will allow for a successful transition to phase V.

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15. Lipham, Rankin, and Hoen, pp. 116-117.

Refinement (phase V) may best be described as a formative measure of staff members' feelings and perceptions of the new programs. This measure might exist either formally or informally. Certainly, minor alterations or corrections to the now-implemented program should not be made without previous consideration of observed behavior and measured opinions of the staff.

Lipham, Rankin, and Hoen consider the actual implementation of alterations determined through the refinement process as renewal. They view this phase as an opportunity to "reexamine and reemphasize goals [within] the innovative program."[16] Finally, the sixth phase, evaluation, is the formal summative measure of the new program.

In applying these steps to the Selinsgrove Area Middle School re-evaluation task force proposal, the writer would expect the task force to play a vital role in the continuous monitoring of the implemented changes. Hopefully, in addition to meeting on a regular basis, task force members would be involved in classroom observations, team meetings, administration-faculty-support staff meetings, and in-service programs intended to incorporate components of the proposed changes.

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16. Lipham, Rankin, and Hoen, p. 117.

Also, in addition to conducting a formal evaluation at an appropriate time following complete implementation of all changes, the writer feels that a complete summative evaluation could best be conducted by an external agency. As mentioned previously, a visitation and evaluation by representatives of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools or the National Middle School Association following complete implementation of all task force recommendations would provide an un-biased evaluation of the facilities, curricular and instructional program, and educational needs of Selinsgrove Area Middle School.

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